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COLLECTING IN ARKANSAS.

By F. A. HARTMAN, Wichita High School.

DURING July one finds collecting in Arkansas more enjoyable than on the Kansas plains. At Siloam Springs there is shade—the kind of shade that is refreshing. This, together with plenty of good, healthy water, makes the hot sun more endurable.

If you go an hour's walk from Siloam Springs to the southwest, your path will be through orchards on rising ground. This rise loses itself abruptly in deep ravines so that you will be surprised to be so suddenly transported from the bright and noisy orchards to the shady solitude of the woods. Some of the ravines are sparsely covered with trees, others are neatly clothed to the bottom, where there may be a spring feeding a merry rivulet or, in place of this, a densely crowded undergrowth. The ravines will lead you into the river valley. To the west of town you will find the prairie, with its farms and groves.

It is in such a place as this that one may expect to find a great variety of life.

The purpose of this paper is to give the observations of a week's exploration of this region.

As to the general distribution of the fauna, we find insects most plentiful on or bordering cultivated ground. The same may be said of the birds, but the reptiles are perhaps more common in the woods. There is very little life in the densely growing woods.

One of the things that attracted my attention was the great number of beetles called fig-eaters (*Allorhina nitida*), which go darting like mad through the orchards with the noise of the bumblebees. They stop a few seconds on some tree, but are off again with as much hurry-scurry as before. There was a large box-elder tree in front of the farmhouse where I stayed that was a favorite place for these insects. From a little after sunup the top of this tree would swarm with these beetles, which were coming and going incessantly. At all times they would not come close enough to the ground while on the tree to be caught with a net. Toward sundown they would begin to disappear until all became quiet.

Of other insects noticeable along the roadside and in the orchards the striking bird grasshopper (*Schistocerca americana*) was quite common.

Occasionally one of the spiny lizards (*Sceloporus u. undulatus*) might be surprised in the road. He would run along the smooth surface for a distance, then scamper into the bushes. It is interesting to see how close they will allow you to get if you move quietly and slowly. I found a specimen one morning on a post, sunning himself. As I carelessly moved toward him he climbed around on the opposite side. Then very quietly I reached a position where I could get a full view of him. I extended my hand cautiously toward him. While doing this he would tilt his head up at me and blink his eyes. If I made a slight irregular movement, he would go a few inches down the post. Finally my hand was close enough so that by a sudden thrust I caught him. Lizards seem to think that anything which is apparently motionless is harmless.

The orchards abound in bird life—doves, thrushes and finches. The mocking-bird loves to build its nest in a thickly leaved tree, while the dove, as usual, scrapes a few sticks together almost anywhere. Where the orchard meets the wood you may rarely see one of those beautiful blue finches (*Guiraca caerulea*) perched on a tree-top.

The chipmunk makes his home in the clearings.

I wish now to take you down a favorite hollow. Here the undergrowth has been burnt out so that you can see to the top of the ridge on either side. The birds are scarce and, as they are everywhere in the woods about, very shy and difficult of approach. The woodpecker is a-tapping away, while the vireo with his plaintive notes entices you on.

Soon you will come to a spring which goes gliding away for a few rods, then disappears in a rocky bed. In the spring, which is as clear as a crystal, upon stooping to drink, I saw what appeared to be a minnow. I dipped him up with my net, and what did I have but a pretty little salamander scarcely two inches long. He had surely chosen a pleasant place to live in the summer-time.

As we move along, capturing an insect here and there, our ear catches a slight sound of rustling leaves. If we watch close, at the next rustle we may see a tiny lizard dart under the leaves. By dashing to the spot and clapping your hands onto the leaves where we saw the sprite disappear, then with

one hand moving the leaves away, we will find Mr. Lizard pinioned. I caught twelve of these fellows by this method in the course of an hour. Upon identification they proved to be *Liolepisma laterale*. The dry leaves seem to be their favorite haunt. I never saw one in any other place.

The little brook continually plays hide and seek until it dashes over a waterfall into a little canyon around which is a cluster of small trees. This is a rendezvous of birds. Conceal yourself and you will think that you have come to a woodland paradise. The birds are singing to the tune of the rippling water, trim little forms flit about—all fills your heart with a love of nature.

Wherever you may be in the woods the hornet, *Vespa carolina*, may be found buzzing along among the weeds and bushes about a foot from the ground. His noise is very attractive, but you find that he is not the only insect which hovers close to the ground with the same buzz. There are two flies which can scarcely be distinguished from him by sound. One is of about the same size and color, so that he imitates the hornet perfectly. The other fly mimics him only in sound, being of a green color.

That interesting snout-beetle, *Upsalis minuta*, is found under the bark of old logs along the river valley. The slender proboscis of the female contrasts oddly with the large head and jaws of the male. One of the large bumblebee-like *asilids* is a rare visitant of the dry timber.

Perhaps the prettiest denizens of the wood are the butterflies and humming-birds. They are certainly in keeping with the surroundings, conveying the idea of beauty without a sound.

Snakes do not seem to be very common. Rattlesnakes are reported from the more unsettled parts; copperheads live in the shady localities, while the blacksnake seems to be rare. A lizard which I have neglected to mention is comparatively common under logs. It is *Eumeces quinque-lineatus*. I found one of these in the stomach of a copperhead.

If you visit the woods many times you will carry a lasting memory of the ticks and jiggers. The tick is a wood-tick whose favorite habit is crawling up the back of the neck into the hair.

The birds in the valley are different than those in the hills. It is here that the larger hawks find their prey. These hawks

may be found any day in the river-bottom perched on some lone tree.

One day while following a hollow to its head an interesting sight greeted my eye. In an old nest about forty feet from the ground stood a spectre of a bird. At first I thought it was a young owl, it stood so silent and watchful. By tossing stones into the surrounding branches I caused it to move, then another smaller one appeared. I could see then that it was a brood of hawks. Anxious to obtain one of the old birds for identification, I lay in wait for half an hour when the mother swooped down and perched on a neighboring tree. A charge of shot wounded her in the wing, bringing her to the ground.

I started to climb the tree, when one of the young ones flew from the nest into another tree. Fearing lest it should escape, I quickly killed it. I climbed the tree again; but this time, as I was about to reach the nest, the other one tried to fly, but succeeded only in skimming its way like an aeroplane to some branches near by, where it clung head down until I relieved it some ten minutes later. The nest was built very much after the fashion of a crow's nest, being made of coarse sticks. It was placed forty feet from the ground, in a tree which stood at the base of a ridge where two hollows met. Within a radius of seventy feet were four old nests, apparently having been used by this same pair on previous years. This was certainly an excellent nesting site, being concealed on all sides but one by trees growing close together. I had passed this place at least three times before but had not seen the nest. The position was in the center of their hunting-ground, with the hills and valleys on one hand and the clearings on the other.

Examination of the stomachs showed that the old bird had eaten a number of fig-eaters while the young bird contained parts of a blacksnake. This hawk is *Buteo latissimus*.

The fauna of this region is very diverse. The winters are so mild that hibernating animals live in the most favorable conditions. This is on the borderland of the South, and likewise shares in the fauna of both the Northern and Southern states. It is an excellent place for the study of animal distribution. We need to know more of regions of this kind.